



January 30, 1997

GENERAL MANUAL (GM)  
190-ECS  
AMENDMENT 5 (PART 409)

SUBJECT: ECS - RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY, OBJECTIVES, AND  
RESPONSIBILITIES

Purpose. To transmit a newly revised Part 409 of GM Title 190.

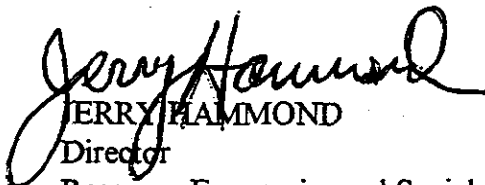
Effective Date. This part is effective as of this date.

Explanation of Changes. Part 409 of GM-190-ECS on Recreation has been amended and updated. The term tourism was added to expand the scope of our education/information assistance opportunities in this area. This amendment clarifies organizational responsibilities for considering recreation and tourism alternatives in our natural resources planning activities. The changes are needed to reflect the reorganized agency structure and functions associated with recreation and tourism policy.

The authority to develop and maintain this policy is shared by the Resource Economics & Social Sciences Division and Biological Conservation Services Division, at the national level. This revision included a comprehensive review which incorporated input from selected personnel in states, regions, institutes, and other divisions.

This policy can also be retrieved electronically from the NRCS homepage by selecting NRCS Operating Policy. Next, click on general manual, then ecological sciences, and scroll to Part 409.

Filing Instructions. Replace the outdated version of Part 409, dated Nov. 1983. Insert Part 409, pages i through 409-4.



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Enclosure

DIST: GM

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PART 409 - RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY, OBJECTIVES  
AND RESPONSIBILITIES

409.1 (c) (5)

409.0 Purpose.

This section addresses the policy, objectives and responsibilities of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in carrying out the mission of the agency with regards to land, water, and related resources for outdoor recreation and tourism.

409.1 Policy.

(a) It is the policy of the Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide technical and, when authorized, financial assistance to individuals, groups, and units of government to plan natural resource conservation systems in relation to recreation and tourism activities. Recreation and tourism are acceptable uses of all natural resources.

(b) Recreation and tourism considerations are an integral part of natural resource planning. Such planning is provided in accordance with the National Planning Procedures Handbook, National Watershed Manual and other pertinent directives.

(c) Within the scope of this policy, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has responsibility for:

(1) Determining the suitability of land and related resources for proposed recreation and tourism use in keeping with natural resource capabilities and proper conservation treatment;

(2) Planning recreational use and treatment of land, water and related resources to minimize erosion and maintain the productive capability of the natural resource base while ensuring safe and enjoyable recreation and tourism opportunities in the future;

(3) Planning and monitoring the installation of conservation measures to facilitate prudent recreational use of soil, water, plants, animals, and air;

(4) Establishing and using proper recreation and tourism and other practice standards in selecting and applying natural resource conservation measures and in ensuring uniform technical quality of these measures;

(5) Providing technical assistance with operation and maintenance of recreation and tourism activities to ensure conservation of natural resources; safe and beneficial operation; and effective use of public funds, when applicable; and

409-1

409.1 (c) (6)

(6) Developing and maintaining appropriate information in all sections of the Field Office Technical Guides (FOTG).

409.2 Objectives.

The primary objectives of outdoor recreation and tourism related to the conservation of natural resources are to:

- (a) Provide technical assistance to landowners, primarily on private and nonfederal public lands, in recognizing and, where appropriate, developing recreation or tourism opportunities on their lands within the capabilities of natural resources and that meets the needs of the local residents and landowners;
- (b) Cooperate with the recreation and tourism industry to maintain or improve economic conditions and life styles within the local area through existing or potential recreation or tourism opportunities;
- (c) Use current conservation technology to ensure that natural resource conditions are maintained or improved as a result of planned recreation or tourism activity;
- (d) Cooperate with the recreation and tourism industry to ensure that new and existing recreation and tourism enterprises utilize the conservation treatments necessary to sustain the supporting resources; and
- (e) Ensure that planning activities consider the identification of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities that are consistent with the wise use of natural resources.

409.3 Means of accomplishing objectives.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service will cooperate with the recreation and tourism industry to:

- (a) Inform land users, managers, and developers about the need to evaluate the potential recreation and tourism opportunities;
- (b) Use current, technically sound procedures in planning and applying natural resource conservation practices and measures on lands used for recreation or tourism;

409.4 (a) (1)

(c) Propose recreation as an alternative to more intensive land uses if the resource base is deteriorating under present use when recreation is a feasible alternative. Identify recreation and tourism opportunities that complement the existing on-farm enterprises and may result in multiple benefits, such as:

- (1) Additional income to the landowner and/or local economy;
- (2) Increased wildlife management;
- (3) Enhanced water quality;
- (4) Increased soil and water conservation;
- (5) Maintenance and enhancement of natural ecosystems; and
- (6) Social benefits such as increased knowledge of natural resources and agriculture.

(d) Establish and maintain effective working relations with Federal, State, and local agencies; educational institutions; tourism groups; and private organizations involved in planning, developing, managing, operating, or maintaining outdoor recreation or tourism;

(e) Provide appropriate training to agency personnel in planning, evaluating, developing, managing, and conserving natural resources used for outdoor recreation and tourism and in relating recreation and tourism to other disciplines in all agency programs;

(f) Evaluate the economic impact and benefits of new and additional recreation and tourism opportunities could have on the local residents and natural resources; and

(g) Cooperate with the recreation and tourism industry to inform their customers on the benefits of conservation of natural resources.

409.4 Responsibilities.

(a) National Headquarters.

(1) The National Technical Guide Committee will establish national practice standards for outdoor recreation, tourism, or related activities. Recreation, tourism, and related activities will be included in other national practice standards in the purposes, condition where practice applies, criteria, and consideration sections, where applicable;

409.4 (a) (2)

(2) National recreation and tourism practice standards will be supported by technical policy leaders; and

(3) National technical leaders will provide liaison with other agencies, groups, and individuals.

(b) Regional Offices.

Periodic review and assessment of recreation and tourism activities will be conducted in the states.

(c) State Offices.

States will modify national practice standards as needed to meet state and local resource needs and test proposed national standards to ensure adaptability and suitability.